

Gallinger's Guidelines



HJB Counseling and Guidance Program Newsletter

November, 2009

"Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence." Helen Keller

Raising kids with optimistic thinking is important to improving their ability to succeed. It helps prevent what is called "learned helplessness". The other day a parent told me that her child always attempts to get her to tie his shoes for him even though he may know how. I suggested she stop whatever she was doing and say to the child that "there is nothing right now more important than you learning to tie your shoes". I suggested she give him all her attention and praise each step until he succeeds.

- When your child faces a challenging new task, break it into small steps, starting with a step he or she can do.
- Praise efforts, not just results.
- Over-praise and under criticize.
- Use bedtime to talk about all the positive aspects of the day just ended.
 - Adapted from The Optimistic Child (1995) by Martin Seligman

Peer mediation: By the middle of October, all nine of the peer mediators had done their first mediation. A total of ten students have had the benefit of this program. Angela and Elena helped distribute the red ribbons for Red Ribbon Week recognition. The team will meet monthly to share ways to promote the program and to brush up on communication skills.

Counseling: The caseload continues to grow. Conferences with parents have been arranged for Nov. 2nd. If any parent would like to request a conference about their child in counseling or would like to ask questions whether or not to refer a child for counseling, please call the Guidance Office.

Fifth graders: The third lesson of the school year will be on "how not to feel left out". This was the number one issue fifth graders recorded on their survey in September. The lesson begins with a discussion on what is meant by the phrase "being left out". Reference is made to the first two guidance lessons wherein self-revealing practices and good listening skills are important steps to feeling included. One student said that she feels included because she doesn't mind "being out there" or taking chances, as it were, to let people know her ideas and opinions. Students work in pairs to come up with positive self-talk, one for boys and another for girls. They then work in a

group of four, to role-play and compare the differences between stereotypical thinking that can lead to prejudicial actions and empathetic thinking, which can lead to inclusive actions. At the end they are asked to compare the consequences of each action.

Fourth graders: In their third lesson they will learn how to analyze a conflict. This will begin the Too Good for Violence (TGFV) curriculum (see below) by encouraging their imaginations to think like a newspaper reporter. They will learn the terminology of fact finding questions. They will learn that a conflict is a problem with two sides, not necessarily an argument or a fight. Through a whacky activity called “create a conflict”, they will learn that conflicts happen to anyone, over many different issues, anywhere, and can happen at any time. How to resolve a conflict peacefully will be the bulk of the fourth grade guidance program. About twelve fourth graders will also have the chance to be trained as peer mediators in January-February of the school year.

Third graders: Third graders will be introduced to TGFV Auto the Robot. The robot character begins to help students recognize the language that leads to describing a conflict without blaming. They will make a paper robot of their own to use in future lessons.

Second graders: Wagner the dog puppet, a part of the TGFV curriculum, will be introduced to the class as a person on the “trail to a peaceable place”. To help this character “feel included”, students will make a dog puppet out of paper bag and will use it in role-playing respect, temper control, and good manners in the coming lessons.

First graders: They will be meeting “Carmen the Cool Cat” from TGFV and hearing her stories for helping kids respect themselves as special individuals and recognize that others are special too. Students will get the chance to express their uniqueness in dance and to name emotions in an activity similar to musical chairs called “cat out of the bag.” Please don’t hesitate to ask your child about these activities and to praise them for their uniqueness every day.

Kindergarteners: These students are learning the importance of showing kindness to others in a new Willdo and Cando Adventure story, “The Friendly Monster”. They have fun imagining what the monster looks like from the story, purposely lacking a picture of the monster, and will draw a picture of it to take home. The “monster” has a party and Cando helps by making special provisions for the seating and food color preferences of the guests, which demonstrates acts of kindness.

- The Too Good for Violence Curriculum or TGFV is a research based curriculum by the Mendez Foundation adopted by the County to be taught in the elementary schools. Parents are welcomed to see all the lessons of the program, organized by grade level, kept in the school’s library.

